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UNH Students Raising Money To Unite Second African Family

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April 26, 2005

Editors: The event is tomorrow; we would appreciate any help you can give us in getting out the word and hope you will consider covering it. Mariana Bitondo Mwisimbwa will be there and available for interviews.

DURHAM, N.H. -- Students at the University of New Hampshire have organized a day of activities to raise enough money to reunite an African family that has been separated for nearly five years because of political violence. Wednesday, April 27, 2005, is Mariana's Day at UNH. The events will run from 3-10:30 p.m. in the Strafford Room of the Memorial Union Building.

The day will begin with a showing of Lumumba, a documentary about the life of revolutionary Patrice Lumumba from the time he first steps into politics in the Belgium-ruled colony of Congo until he is murdered in 1961, just two months after he is elected prime minister in the newly independent Congo.

Throughout the day information will be available about Mariana and her family as well as the current situation in Congo. At 6:30 p.m. there will be a concert featuring Noise Machine and Sidecar Radio. Tickets for the concert are \$5. All other activities, including the movie, are free.

The Committee on Rights and Justice (CORAJ) is working to reunite Mariana Bitondo Mwisimbwa with her husband and four children, who were recently relocated from the Congo to Cameroon where they have been living in a boarding house. According to Nina Glick-Schiller, professor of anthropology, the family has been told they will receive their visas and final traveling papers this week. They need to raise an additional \$6,000 in less than a month to pay for their travel. Five years ago Mwisimbwa fled the Congo after being raped and beaten because her law firm represented a member of the political opposition.

Anyone wishing to make a donation can mail a check to Danny's Team, P.O. Box 606, Durham, NH 03824.